

Mar. 2. 2005 3:20PM

No. 1537 P. 6

2

In the claims:

Mar. 2. 2005 3:20PM

No. 1537 P. 7

3

Claims 1-62 (canceled)

63. (original) A method of assembling wrapped bakery products into predetermined patterns and thereafter transferring the patterns of wrapped bakery products into bakery trays for transport including the steps of:

providing a grouping apparatus for receiving individual wrapped bakery products;

arranging groups of between 1 and about 6 wrapped bakery products on the grouping apparatus;

providing a turntable;

providing a transfer apparatus for moving groups of wrapped bakery products from the grouping apparatus onto the turntable; and

arranging a subsequent group of wrapped bakery products on the grouping apparatus during movement of a previous group of wrapped bakery products from the grouping apparatus onto the turntable under the action of the transfer apparatus.

64. (currently amended) A method of forming wrapped bakery products into predetermined pattern thereafter transferring the patterns of wrapped bakery products into bakery trays including the steps of:

providing a turntable;

forming a pattern of wrapped bakery products on the turntable;

providing a transfer apparatus;

moving patterns of wrapped bakery products directly from the turntable into bakery trays under the action of the transfer apparatus; and

forming a subsequent pattern of wrapped bakery products on the turntable during movement of a previous pattern of wrapped bakery products into a bakery tray under the action of the transfer apparatus.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 14 and ending on page 15, which starts with "The pattern former 100 further includes a transfer apparatus 110" with the following amended paragraph:

The pattern former 100 further includes a transfer apparatus 110 which ~~transfer~~ transfers groups of wrapped bakery products from the grouping conveyor apparatus 108 onto a vacuum turntable 112. An important feature of the present invention comprises the fact that the transfer apparatus ~~100~~ 110 is adapted to transfer a first group of wrapped bakery products to the vacuum turntable 112 while a subsequent group of wrapped bakery products is being arranged on the grouping apparatus 108. The ability of the pattern former of the present invention to perform these two functions simultaneously comprises a significant improvement over the prior art which results in the pattern former of the present invention having a significantly improved throughput rate when compared with prior art pattern formers.

Please replace the paragraph on page 19, which starts with "The pusher plate cam 154"

with the following amended paragraph:

The pusher plate ~~cam~~ cams 154 include pivotally supported sections 166. As the pusher plate 150 moves away from the turntable 112 and toward the motor 140, the cam followers 164 engage the pivotally supported portions 166 which thereupon pivot upwardly allowing the cam followers 164 to continue in engagement with the lower camming surfaces of the pusher plate cams 154.

Please replace the paragraph on page 24, which starts with "The transfer apparatus 110 which moves groups of wrapped bakery products" with the following amended paragraph:

The transfer apparatus 110 which moves groups of wrapped bakery products from the grouping apparatus 108 to the vacuum table 112 operates exactly the same as the transfer apparatus 116, the only difference being that the transfer apparatus 110 does not include a spanker plate. The transfer apparatus 110 includes a pusher plate 182 which is mounted on a belt driven traveler constructed similarly to and functioning identically to the traveler 142 and which is activated by cams constructed similarly to and functioning identically to the cams 154. Thus, the apparatus 110 operates identically to the operation of the pusher plate 150 of the transfer apparatus 116 in that it is positioned in a downwardly extending, operative orientation as it moves groups of bakery products from the grouping apparatus 108 to the vacuum turntable 112, and is cammed upwardly into a horizontally disposed orientation as it moves in the reverse direction, that is, away from the vacuum turntable 112 and back toward the grouping apparatus 108. In this manner the pattern former of the present invention functions to arrange a subsequent group of wrapped bakery products on the grouping apparatus 108 as

the pusher plate ~~101~~ 182 is moving a previous group of wrapped bakery products onto the conveyor 112. The fact that the two operations occur simultaneously comprises an important feature of the pattern former 100 which substantially increases the throughput rate thereof.